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(54) Title: A METHOD AND AN APPARATUS FOR FEEDING IMAGE PLATES USED FOR INTRAORAL DENTAL X-RAY  
PHOTOGRAPHY INTO A READING DEVICE

## (57) Abstract

The invention relates to a method and an apparatus for feeding image plates (1) used in intraoral dental X-ray photography into a reading device. During the reading step an excited phosphorus layer on the plate (1) is scanned with a laser beam and is converted into a visible image on a display screen or a film. In accordance with the invention, the excited image plates (1) are removed from their protective bags and are stacked into a housing (2) which acts as their intermediate storage and is protected from light, from where the plates are gripped by a conveyor, such as a toothed belt (16), to be fed forwards. The plates can be pulled or pressed e.g. by a magnet (12) and/or a pushing device (15) towards a conveyor-conducted laterally of the housing. The conveyor (9) may comprise gripping means (16), with which the conveyor entrains the image plate which is closest each time and moves it forward on the transfer path onto the path of the slide integrated in the reading device. The slide grips the plate which gets within its reach each time and transfers it to the reading step for the image to be read and the plate to be cleared. The slide may make a reciprocating movement so as to return the plates which have been read onto the conveyor (9), which then also carries out removal of the plates.

